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WHY WOOD DECAYS.

Government Experts Are Studying Means of Preventing Decay.

Washington, March 25.—Piles driven by the hut dwellers of the Baltic centuries ago are as sound today as when first placed. The wooden coffins in which the Egyptians buried their dead are still preserved in perfect condition after thousands of years of service.

The longevity of timber under these two extremes of climate and moisture conditions has naturally made people ask, "what causes wood decay?" The answer is, fungi and bacteria, low forms of plant life which live in the wood and draw their nourishment from it. The little organisms are so little that a microscope is required to see them, yet their work results in the destruction of billions of feet of lumber each year and the railroad corporation with its cross tie bill running up into seven figures and the farmer who spends a hundreds or so dollars a year for fence posts are alike drawing upon the knowledge of experts in all parts of the world in efforts to learn the most economical and most satisfactory method of preserving wood against the inroads of decay. In studying the means of preventing decay wood-preserving experts have learned many things about the obnoxious fungi which sap the life of timber.

The small organisms can grow either in light or in total darkness; but all of them require requisite amounts of air, food, moisture and heat. If one or more of these essential requirements is lacking, they can not live, and the decay of timber will not take place. Wood constantly submerged in water never rots, simply because there is an insufficient supply of air. This condition accounts for the soundness of the old Baltic piles. On the other hand, if wood can be kept air-dry it will not decay because there will then be too little moisture. The timber used by the Egyptians will last indefinitely so long as it is bone-dry.

There are a great many cases, however, where it is impossible to keep wood submerged in water, or in an absolutely air-dry condition. In fact, a large percentage of the timber which is used is exposed to the weather, and is subjected to decay simply because it contains enough air and enough water for the decomposing organisms to get a foothold. Decay is most serious where the atmosphere is warm and damp, because these conditions are most favorable for its development. In the coal mines of Pennsylvania timber decays in two or three years, because the temperature is warm and constant and the air is damp. And in the South, the warm, humid atmosphere often causes the timber to rapidly decompose.

Decay may be prevented by two gen-

eral methods; by treating the wood with antiseptics, thus poisoning the food supply of the organisms which cause decay and by treating it with oils which render it waterproof. A combination of these two methods is most commonly used, as when wood is treated with creosote which fills up the pores in the timber and keeps out water and is also a powerful antiseptic.

The United States government considers the investigations of the preservative treatment of timber of such importance that the business of one branch of a bureau in the Department of Agriculture—the "Office of Wood Preservation" in the Forest Service at Washington, is given over entirely to the work of experiments in co-operation with railroad companies and individuals in prolonging the life of railroad ties, mine props, bridge timbers, fence posts and transmission poles. Advice and practical assistance is furnished all who request this advice of the Forester. The lengthening of life of timber means the saving of thousands of dollars annually through doing away with the heavy expense of labor and cost of material for renewals.

TARIFF ON FOREIGN COTTON.

Florida Delegation in Congress Making Vigorous Fight for It.

Washington, March 21.—The members of the Florida delegation intend to make an earnest fight to provide a tariff on importations of foreign cotton, especially Egyptian. It will be recalled that the Florida legislature, on more occasions than once, has expressed itself in favor of a tariff on cotton of 10 cents per pound and 50 per cent ad valorem, which would be equivalent to a total of about 18 cents per pound. This, plus the cost, 17 cents per pound, would make it impossible to import cotton at less than a total cost of 35 cents per pound, and the effect would be the importation of no foreign cotton. Of course, it will be impossible to obtain anything like 10 cents per pound and 50 per cent ad valorem, or even 10 cents per pound. The only Democratic argument that can be made in the case is that of tariff for revenue, and, when a prohibitive tariff is obtained no revenue is produced. It may be possible, however, to obtain a rate of 5 cents per pound, and, as the annual importation of Egyptian cotton into the United States is about 70,000,000 pounds, it will be seen that 5 cents per pound would produce a revenue of \$3,500,000.

Egyptian cotton is not altogether a competitor of Sea Island. If it were, it would drive out the Sea Island from the market, and make it unprofitable for the producer to grow it, for the Egyptian cotton is available in very large supply, the Sea Island in limited supply, or about

35,000,000 pounds, and yet the Sea Island oversells the Egyptian from 7 to 10 cents per pound.

In a recent bulletin on the subject of uses to which Egyptian cotton are put, the department of commerce and labor says:

"There are four principal reasons for the extensive use of Egyptian cottons in the United States: (1) They are best adapted to mercerizing and other processes that give a high finish to cloth and cause it to resemble silk; (2) their exceptional clearness (freedom from nap) and luster, as well as their capacity for taking dyes, fit them for mixing with silk and for filling sateen, India linens and similar goods having a brilliant surface; (3) the brown color of Mit Afifi fiber allows it to be used without dyeing in manufacturing goods, such as balbriggan underwear and lace curtains, in which the ecru shade is desired; (4) they can be used for the manufacture of sewing thread and other articles which no other type of cotton but Sea Island is suitable. Owing to the higher price of the latter, Egyptian cottons can in many cases be advantageously substituted.

"Except in cases where the brown-colored fibre is especially desired there seems to be little reason for preferring Egyptian to Sea Island cotton, although one manufacturer reports that, within the range of the numbers used, the former furnishes a cleaner and better looking filling than either Sea Island or peeler (long staple upland) cottons. The highest grades of Sea Island have longer and finer fibre than any other cotton, and therefore make stronger and finer yarns and thread. For these grades the Egyptian cannot be substituted, but in manufacturing various classes of goods the somewhat lower price of Egyptian cotton allows them to be used to advantage in place of the lower grades of Sea Island, especially when the supply of the latter is below the normal.

"Apart from specific qualities of the fibre, American manufacturers give other reasons for preferring Egyptian cotton. They state that it is usually more carefully ginned, graded and baled, and is apt to be freer from trash and short fiber, hence giving less waste in carding and combing than either Sea Island or long staple upland cottons. Egyptian cotton is also esteemed for its evenness of staple, the different grades showing little variation in this respect from year to year."

The Morning Quarrel.

"Say," called his wife from the window, "you forgot something."

"What did I forget?"

"You forgot to slam the door."

He slammed it all right, all right, all right.

AN EPIDEMIC OF GLANDERS.

The City Council of Jacksonville Take Drastic Steps to Stamp It Out.

In order to extirpate the present epidemic of glanders existing in the stables of the Cook Transfer Company, the Jacksonville City Council in special session Wednesday night adopted a resolution authorizing the city health officer to take such steps as necessary for the proper burial of the bodies of all horses killed on account of being infected with the deadly disease. Incorporated in the resolution was a provision that the money with which to defray the expense of burying the bodies of the dead animals was to be taken from the contingency fund of the board of health, which body is to report such expenditure to the city council in order that the amount expended may be refunded from such funds available for the purpose. The meeting of the council was called by the mayor.

Little has been said publicly about the cases of glanders existing among the horses in the Cook stables. However, the epidemic in the Cook stables has grown to such a condition that an official of the United States bureau of animal industry has been sent here to investigate, and the state was threatened with being quarantined against unless the condition that existed was materially improved immediately.

Conference Held.

In the office of the mayor yesterday morning a conference concerning the matter took place. Participating in the conference were Dr. E. M. Nighbert of the United States bureau of animal industry, Dr. J. Y. Porter, state health officer; Dr. Romero, city health officer; Dr. Mehaffy, state veterinarian; Dewitt T. Gray, county solicitor; J. M. Barrs, city attorney; Attorney F. P. Fleming, representing Mr. Cook; E. J. L'Engle, attorney for the state board of health, and several other officials and livery stable men.

It was stated at the meeting that about twenty-five horses infected with the disease had been taken from the Cook stables and killed, and about sixty more horses were infected, and would have to be killed in order to eradicate the disease. There was no chance of cure for the sixty horses now at the stables infected with the disease, so it was said, and the only practicable thing to be done was to kill them promptly, and thus prevent a spread of the disease.

Pronounced Glanders.

Dr. E. M. Nighbert, the government expert, and Dr. MeHaffey, the state expert, had carefully examined the animals, and found that they were afflicted with virulent forms of glanders.

Mr. Cook, owner of the largest number of the horses infected, stated that he was willing to have the animals killed in order